

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. (Previously presented) A process for forming preform having a first portion and a second portion at an angle to the first portion, the first portion being curved, the process comprising the steps of:
  - folding the first portion onto the second portion;
  - cutting threads of the first portion for permitting the first portion to be curved without crumples;
  - stretching the first portion;
  - unfolding the first portion off of the second portion; and
  - forming the first portion into a curve without crumples.
2. (cancelled)
3. (Previously presented) The process as set forth in claim 1 including the step of impregnating the preform prior to the step of cutting the threads.
4. (Previously presented) The process as set forth in claim 3 wherein the step of stretching further comprises the steps of:
  - providing a first die and a mating second die, the first die and the mating die defining molding surfaces having a tapered sine wave configuration;
  - disposing the folded and cut first and second portions between the first die and the second die; and
  - closing the first die and the second die onto first and second portions.
5. (cancelled)
6. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 4 wherein the stretching step comprises the step of closing the first die onto the second die.
7. (Previously presented) The process of claim 1 wherein the threads are cut into the curved portion parallel to the direction of curvature over a length equal to the length of the curve, such that the cuts in each thread are spaced from the cuts in the adjacent threads.

8. (currently amended) A process for forming a preform having a curved portion, the curved portion having a progressively increasing radius from a first edge to a second edge, the process comprising the steps of:

providing a stretchable preform;  
stretching the preform with mating dies for progressively expanding the preform from the first edge to the second edge; and  
after the stretching step, shaping the preform into a substantially flat curved configuration curved portion of the preform without crumples to form the curved portion.

9. (Previously presented) The process of claim 8 wherein the curved portion is a foot portion of the preform.

10. (Previously presented) The process of claim 8 wherein the curved portion is a leg portion of the preform.

11. (Previously presented) The process of claim 8 wherein the preform is darted.

12. (currently amended) The process of claim 8 wherein the shaping step comprises the step of forming the stretched preform about a die surface of a second die having a final desired shape of the preform.

13. (Previously presented) The process of claim 8 wherein the mating dies define molding surfaces having a tapered sine wave configuration.

14. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 13 wherein the stretching step comprises the steps of:

disposing the preform between the mating tapered sine wave dies;  
aligning the inner radius to a small amplitude end of the mating tapered sine wave dies;

aligning the outer radius to a large amplitude end of the mating tapered sine wave dies; and

closing the mating tapered sine wave dies onto the preform.